DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 351 793 EA 024 485

TITLE	Restructuring School Governance: The Chicago Experience.
INSTITUTION	Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools, Madison, WI.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	92
CONTRACT	R117Q000015-92
NOTE	19p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT	Issues in Restructuring Schools; n3 Fall 1992
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Elementary Education; Foundation Programs; *Governance; *Participative Decision Making; *Politics of Education; Program Implementation; *School Based Management; School Community Relationship; *School Restructuring
IDENTIFIERS	*Chicago Public Schools IL

ABSTRACT

The Chicago experience in school governance restructuring is examined in this newsletter. The introduction distinguishes between school-based management and shared decision-making and provides an overview of Chicago's restructured school governance. Next, findings of a study that examined school governance in 12 diverse Chicago elementary schools are presented. Results suggest a need for a shift in perspective on the nature of democratic school politics. A third article presents observations on the implementation of reform in two Chicago public elementary schools that serve economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. The contrasts between the schools were significant and showed that changing the governance structure created opportunities for local initiatives. However, the successful use of those opportunities depended on social resources, local leadership, and technical expertise that many schools and neighborhoods lack. The final article is an interview with Peter Martinez, the director of the Chicago Educational Initiative, on the role of foundation support in innercity school reform. He offers an optimistic perspective on the future of restructured governance in Chicago schools. A list of resources is included. (LMI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED351793

Issues in restructuring schools

Restructuring School Governance: The Chicago Experience

A Closer Look at Two School Communities

Thomas and Alexander Elementary Schools share much in common. Both sit in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods and serve exclusively low-income students.[1] Buildings in the immediate neighborhood are dilapidated, gang violence and graffiti are prevalent and so are drugs. Those families that can leave, do; and student mobility is consequently high. Both schools control, however, a considerable amount of discretionary monies which are provided under a variety of local, state and federal programs. Despite these similarities, the political practice of these two schools and progress of school reform could not be more different.

We have been observing the implementation of reform in twelve Chicago school communities for the past two years. We describe below the political activities occurring in two of these schools. In both cases, we focus on the three sites of power created by the legislation—parents and community members, principals, and the faculty—and the shifting relations among them. We attend particularly to differences in the kinds of conversations occurring in these two schools and the factors that appear to contribute to this.

Thomas Elementary School:
An Emergent Politics of Enhanced School Community

A Base of Social Resources

The Thomas School community, has always been a port of entry, first to European and now to Mexican immigrants. Although poor, the community has many viable institutions. This is a predominantly Catholic community with mostly two parent and extended families. Women, especially first generation immigrants, stay home to care for their own children and those of relatives still in Mexico.

These women, many of them in their thirties and forties, are an important resource to the school, and the school in turn supports them. They bring old world norms of respect for teachers and deference for authority, and model these behaviors for their children. These attitudes enable bonds to be created that extend across differences in ethnicity (only about a third of the teachers are Hispanic), culture, and class. As one teacher says:

"I like the kids and their parents. . . a lot of the moms trust us to treat their kids right and then support us. They support their kids too. They tell their kids to listen to us. . . the children are sweet. They're easy to teach. . . gentle, quiet little kids."

continued on page 8

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ISSUE REPORT NO. 3
FALL 1992

A Closer Look at Two School Communities 1
Director's Introduction 2
The Chicago Experiment 3
Interview 14

EA 024 485

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Director's Introduction

Since 1988, the 600 schools in Chicago have been operating under the most extensive effort in restructured school governance in US history.

by Fred M. Newmann

School restructuring takes many forms, and changing the structure of school governance is prominent. The two major changes in school governance are: site-based management (SBM), to decentralize decision-making authority from the state or district to the individual school site; and shared decision-making (SDM), to expand the cast of key decision-makers beyond principals to include teachers and parents. The use of either SBM or SDM, however, does not necessarily entail the use of other. A school might have considerable autonomy from the district under SBM, but the principal might retain virtually all powers of governance at the school. Or, teachers might run their school democratically, with only minimal leadership from a principal (SDM), but the school staff may have virtually no control over curriculum, staffing and budget.

Why should governance changes such as SBM or SDM improve education for students? There is no guarantee they will, unless combined with several other features of school restructuring, such as better curriculum, teaching, and assessment. The rationale for restructuring governance along these lines is that education is more likely to serve the needs of students if the most important issues for schools (especially decisions on curriculum, staffing, and budget) are decided by the adults who know those particular students the best. When schools must respond to extensive regulation by distant authorities, education at each school suffers, because local administrators, teachers, and parents who know the students best have little influence on what happens in school.

Schools that practice SBM and SDM gain "empowerment," but they too face several problems. Conflict within a school staff over educational goals can lead to stalemates and compromises that serve no students well. Teachers may not value parents' input when they feel parents lack important professional knowledge. If teachers and parents lack skills of group-work and productive discourse within democratic structures, governance meetings add to inefficiencies and breed distrust. Even when SBM and SDM seem to proceed smoothly, a school may still offer low quality education, if both teachers and parents at the schools are poorly informed about effective approaches to curriculum, teaching, and assessment.

Since 1988, the 600 schools in Chicago have been operating under the most extensive effort in restructured school governance in US history. Mandated by the Illinois legislature, each school is run by a local school council (LSC) of six parents, two community representatives, 2 teachers and the principal. The LSC has authority over the school's improvement plan, the budget, and the right to hire and fire the principal. Principals have increased authority over budgets, physical plant, and personnel. A Professional Personnel Advisory Committee of teachers has advisory responsibility for curriculum and instruction.

How is restructured governance working in Chicago? This *Issue Report* presents some initial findings from research directed by Anthony Bryk of the Center for School Improvement at the University of Chicago. Bryk and colleagues have studied restructured school governance in 12 elementary schools in diverse neighborhoods throughout the city. Their work is guided by political theory, and the research article here by Bryk and assistant director Sharon Rollow suggests the need for a shift in perspective on the nature of democratic school politics itself. The cover article of this *Report* describes the political process in two schools.

Contrasts between the schools are significant, and show that changing the governance structure creates opportunities for local initiative, but the successful use of those opportunities depends upon social resources, local leadership, and technical expertise that many schools and neighborhoods lack. We include an interview with an executive of a major foundation who offers an optimistic perspectives on the future of restructured governance in Chicago.

It is too early to report on the effects of restructured governance on curriculum and instruction, but informed observers agree that significant improvement here will require major investment and effort. Finally, we offer a list of resources for further information on the Chicago reform.

The Chicago Experiment: Enhanced Democratic Participation as a Lever for School Improvement

by Anthony S. Bryk and Sharon G. Rollow

This is a report on work-in-progress supported by the National Center on School Organization and Restructuring and a grant from the Spencer Foundation. The authors want to acknowledge the contributions of other members of the research team in this effort: Barbara Schneider, Michael Bennett, Al Bertani, Jennifer Cox, David Jacobsen, Lisa Moultrie, Rachel Resnick, Sara Spurlark and Josie Yanguas. The authors alone, however, are responsible for any errors of fact or interpretation.

Background on Chicago School Reform

In December, 1988 the Illinois state legislature passed the Chicago School Reform Act. This legislation, PA 85-1418, emerged out of a lengthy political process involving a coalition of community people working in tandem with advocacy groups and the business community.[1]

Touted as "the most fundamental restructuring since the early part of the twentieth century,"[2] the Act has also been called "radical...a triumph... historic" and "more than educational change. . . In Chicago school reform is a social movement that embraces and reflects the city's diversity."[3]

Chicago's reform, however, is not without its critics. Suspicion still simmers within the city about the "real motivations" behind reform. When parent empowerment and decentralization were first proposed, a number of the city's African-American leaders were skeptical. They argued that parents want good schools for their children, but did not wish to run them nor did they necessarily have the expertise to do so. They feared that this reform was designed to fail in order to achieve the real aim of some politicians and business people: The replacement of the Chicago Public School (CPS) system with a private educational market. It seemed hardly coincidental that radical decentralization swept over the school system just as African-Americans had assumed leadership of the central administration and teachers' union.

Chicago's reform is also under scrutiny on the national scene where critics frequently describe it as anti-professional—a perspective not without some justification, since it strips tenure away from principals and grants teachers only an advisory role. Don Moore, an author of the Act and director of one of the city's school advocacy groups, had specifically argued that "the power of urban school professionals must be curtailed because professional judgment has repeatedly been used as an excuse for practices that are harmful to children."[4] Others see the reform as simply a replay of the 1960's community empowerment movement, which promoted similar improvements, but failed to produce broad systemic change in educational opportunities.[5]

On balance, PA 85-1418 involves a more sophisticated conception of school reform than most of its critics acknowledge. Prior to reform, the highly centralized bureaucracy tended to squelch local initiative, to impair principals', teachers', and parents' efforts at improvement, and to diminish their sense of agency. In response, PA 85-1418 sought to replace traditional bureaucratic control of schools with a complex system of decision-making by local school. The vertical "problem-solution path," where local school officials looked up into the system for guidance, shifted horizontally causing greater engagement of school professionals with their local communities.[6]

More specifically, the Act promotes three distinct sites of power in school communities, each of which now holds potential for initiating a serious challenge to the status quo. First, the Act created opportunities for parents and community members to exercise initiative by giving parent-dominated Local School Councils (LSCs) specific powers "to hire and fire" the school principal, and to approve the budget and School Improvement Plan. Second, principals received more power over their budgets, physical plant and personnel, and were encouraged to use these resources to solve local problems. Whereas in the past principals were expected to follow orders passed down through the system, the job now demands a responsiveness to local clients. Third, the Act gave teachers a voice in principal selection and retention by providing two faculty seats on the LSC, and advisory responsibility over school curriculum and instruction in the Professional Personnel Advisory Committee (PPAC). Chicago reform, thus, sought to encourage greater engagement, not only by parents and community members, but also by principals and teachers.

Computer skills start in kindergarten

In addition to reorienting the political environment of schools toward greater local participation and responsibility, the reform legislation has several other major provisions. It mandated that state compensatory education funds flow directly to Chicago's schools proportional to their low income membership. This assured that schools with high percentages of disadvantaged students would receive a substantial infusion of funds to support new initiatives. Previously, these funds were used by the District as general aid.

The Act also established greater control by the local school over its personnel and building. Where teachers previously had been assigned by the Board of Education, principals can now recruit and choose new staff. To expedite the removal of incompetent teachers, the remediation process was shortened from 1 year to 45 days. (Only after an unsuccessful remediation process can an incompetent teacher be removed from the classroom.) Principals also have a voice in hiring and evaluating new janitorial and food service personnel by virtue of the Act, and they now have their own building keys. (Prior to reform, principals held keys at the discretion of the school engineer.) Taken together, these new budget, personnel, and plant provisions were intended to assure that schools have adequate resources and authority to advance their initiatives.

Balancing the emphasis on local empowerment are legislative provisions that sought to pull schools toward educational improvement. These consisted of explicit educational goals for children, e.g. 50% of the students in each school will be at national norms by 1994; and an extended set of school objectives, e.g. enhanced teacher professionalism, multicultural curriculum, and greater parent involvement. The Act also mandated strategic planning designed to make local school decision-making more rational. Schools are required to develop three year improvement plans which must be evaluated and updated annually to assure progress toward local goals and legislatively mandated goals. The Chicago school system is required to report annually on each school's progress. If progress is insufficient, a school is subject to a variety of increasingly severe sanctions that may culminate in termination of the principal's contract, removal of the LSC, and placing the school under the receivership of the Board of Education.

In general terms, the legislation attacked the failures of the Chicago school system from two different directions. At the grassroots level, it sought to encourage expanded democratic participation by giving school communities some real authority and resources to solve problems locally. To guide these developments toward valued ends, the legislation added specific goals and objectives, and an accountability and strategic planning process. The aim was to create an overall environment in the CPS that would promote local change.

Moving beyond the formal legislative provisions, PA 85-1418 has also precipitated a substantial expansion of institutional activity focused on improving education. Over the last four years, numerous associations among the city's business and professional leaders have emerged to provide technical and financial assistance to and advocate for individual schools. Education has been a sustained focus of activity among civic groups and community-based organizations (CBOs). The local philanthropic community has committed substantial new funds. Individual faculty members from colleges and universities in the metropolitan area are active in Chicago's schools, and several new research, development, and professional education centers have emerged. In the past, many of these individuals and institutions felt discouraged by their encounters with a seemingly disinterested school bureaucracy.

Four years into reform, it is clear that the CPS system is in the midst of a major organizational restructuring. The central bureaucracy has been substantially weakened, replaced by the greatly expanded democratic activity both in individual school communities and citywide. Neither the Board, nor the central office, nor any other single entity is controlling this change process; rather, power is broadly diffused and extensive conversations about school improvement are sustained throughout the city. Moreover, the content of this conversation is evolving and these changes are influencing policy. Two years ago attention focused almost exclusively on the formation and training of LSCs. Now conversations have shifted to the kinds of additional resources and institutional supports needed by local schools to affect substantive changes in classrooms and instruction.

At present, it is too early to determine whether this legislation will culminate in enhanced student learning.[7] It is clear, however, that Chicago School Reform has catalyzed enterprise in many individual school communities and throughout the city. Whatever the longer term outcomes, there are important lessons here about efforts to decentralize authority, to enhance the capacities of parents and communities to look out for their own interests, and to engage professionals to work toward community goals.

Traditional Views of School Politics

The vast majority of past studies of educational politics have taken their lead from Peterson who focused on the pluralist bargaining that occurred among interest groups on Chicago's school board.[8] This research, and other related studies at the federal and state level, offers a rather cynical and unflattering picture of educational politics as a "jungle" where individuals and groups compete to advance their particular interests. Marginal changes may be affected, but the basic structure of the system, and especially the power relations within it, remain unchallenged.

More recently, in a study of the interactions between principals and teachers, Ball describes the struggle within British secondary schools over scarce resources—faculty promotions, plum teaching assignments, and instructional materials.[9] Headmasters in these schools deliberately allocated resources to maintain a semblance of harmony and protect the status quo.

We too have observed interest politics in individual Chicago school communities. The School Reform Act opened school doors to their neighborhoods. Not surprisingly, pressing community issues often find parallel expression within the school. In one of our field site communities, for example, gentrification is occurring. The LSC is factionalized between the interests of developers and the affluent residents they are bringing into the neighborhood, and the older CBOs who advocate for the low-income families being forced out. Allocation of discretionary monies in this school has become an arena for political contest. While low-income community groups want to encourage a greater involvement of poor parent and community members by hiring some of these individuals as tutors, the school staff along with some of the newer community residents prefer to use these funds to create additional teaching positions.

Such activities are consistent with accounts of the earlier school decentralization in New York, where the basic elements of "big city" politics—fights over contracts and jobs—was largely transferred from the citywide Board of Education to district-level boards. Although the context shifted, the basic nature of political activity did not.

Unlike New York, the fundamental governance unit in Chicago is the individual school, not a district-level board. As a result, the distance between the site of political activity and its consequences are radically reduced. Individual accountability for political activity is now more sharply drawn.

The introduction of parents and community members into local school politics also appears to have changed the nature of this activity—at least in some schools. As Ball notes, most educational decision-making is dominated by professionals and involves a deliberate attempt to depoliticize local problems. Public choices about common affairs are viewed as technical issues requiring experts and other managers to solve. This professionalization of the public realm displaces more fundamental discussions among citizens about their schools including the "opportunity to debate the definition of the school."[10] In contrast, in those Chicago schools where parents are actively involved, we have seen LSC members press a more personal perspective about what "our school" must do to meet the needs of "our children."

A Politics of Enabling School Communities [11]

The full breadth of the political activity occurring in Chicago's schools is not adequately captured by a conception of school politics which reduces all activities to a competition among individuals and groups over scarce resources. In expanding on this pluralist bargaining framework, we have turned to writings about renewed democratic institutions.[12] These authors maintain that a renewed democratic politics, rooted in sustained local participation, is the necessary antidote to unresponsive societal institutions. They remind us of the importance of public discussion about common affairs, of the educational opportunities inherent in such conversations, and how over the long term, this activity can help institutions become more self-guided. Chicago's efforts at local empowerment hold potential for enabling school communities to create an alternative vision of education for their children.

This concept of school politics encourages us to attend to the nature of political discourse in school communities. Who is involved, what concepts appear salient and how are they being advanced? Do parents and community members bring forth new interests that challenge existing ones? Now that individual principals and teachers are freer to express views distinct from the central office, what issues do they introduce? Of key concern is whether the definition of the school—its mission, goals, and understandings about 'how things get done around here'—is subject to challenge.

The spirit of the reform legislation and the broader discussions about schooling that are occurring across the city play an important role in this regard. This rhetoric challenges each school community to create an institution that is sensitive to the needs of its specific population, one where "all children" will succeed and no child will fail. If taken seriously at a local school, these ideas can act as a powerful counterforce to a politics of private interests. In such a school, the efforts of the LSC parent seeking to improve educational opportunities for his or her own child can evolve into advancing the welfare of all children. Similarly, efforts by teachers to improve their work conditions can press for a re-examination of school operations to better serve students' needs.

Bake sale at the Parent Center

Places where such activity is occurring are marked by sustained debate over the key ideas that vie for moral authority and their role in specific school improvement plans. To be sure, individuals disagree and conflicts can be intense. But these debates are about matters of broad concern, rather than narrow personal gains, and different perspective can often be transformed into common interests. This is quite different from pluralist bargaining, which at its best produces a compromise among fixed interests, and at its worst creates winners and losers. In contrast, when a politics of enabling school communities is successfully engaged, the base of shared understandings grows, positive sentiments and trust among participants rise, and the capacity of the school community to tackle even larger problems expands. Over time, a detailed scrutiny of existing organizational practices becomes likely.

On balance, the road to an effective local politics is neither easy nor assured and it is not without its own distinctive problems. Parochialism, intolerance toward strangers, and maintaining an openness to new ideas are potential pitfalls of localism. Moreover, many Chicago school communities suffer from high student and family mobility, a history of hostility between parents and school professionals, and a neighborhood context plagued by poverty, violence, and an overriding concern for personal safety and survival. When combined with a cynical view that politics means "taking care of your own," these are not favorable conditions for the development of a politics of enabling school communities. Ironically, while broad participation expands the social resources in a school community, the emergence and growth of such participation depends on these very same resources.

These concerns notwithstanding, the idea of school communities as sites of strong democratic practice remains appealing. This seems especially so when we acknowledge that the aim of political activity—school improvement—is not a quick fix. Rather, school change necessitates the development of trusting personal relationships among parents, teachers, and principal, and requires that these relationships be sustained if school staff are to take risks, work together, and stay committed for the long haul. That is, this systemic change process demands a strong democratic practice.

An Important Role for Normative Understandings

At the core of strong democratic practice is sustained conversation. Chicago's school reform substantially expanded the scope of this activity in individual schools. Many basic school practices (e.g. should students march between classroom in orderly lines or be required to wear uniforms?) which were simply taken for granted in the past or decided by administrative fiat are now subject to debate among parents, community members, teachers and the principal. Each participant brings to these discussions his or her own personal views, or normative understandings about what is "good," "proper," and "right" for their school. Different normative ideas built up out of past family, school, and work experiences are now transported into these deliberations and can become sources of conflict among those now responsible for their school. These disagreements can be particularly sharp in some schools because of the highly varied backgrounds among the participants.

Included here are assumptions about: What is a good school (e.g. a place that has the programs and resources of a suburban school versus one that may need to be structured differently to meet the needs of particular students and families); about what children should learn (e.g. specific knowledge and skills to be acquired versus a view of students as active learners); about how children and parents should be treated, and how, in turn, children and parents should treat teachers. In addition, since politics is the lever for school change in Chicago, understandings about the nature and purposes of civic and polit-

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ical participation, also come into play.

Although rooted in personal background and experience, normative understandings are not static. Rather they can be reshaped through social interaction in settings where different expectations and ideas prevail. The LSC holds potential as a context for such human development, to cultivate the skills of citizenship, enrich their personal competence. Here, parents, teachers, and principal can learn about each other, and in the course of work they must do together, forge a common interest. Through such interactions, basic understandings about roles, authority and domains of practice can be recast and the institution itself renormed.

Ultimately, if such activity is maintained for a period of time, a more unitary form of politics may emerge, when matters of importance are regularly discussed, and conflict is less threatening because there are avenues for resolution when it does occur.[13] The institution benefits from a substantial social resource formed out of both a set of principles held in common and the trusting face-to-face relationships built up within the small confines of a single school community.

The Interaction with Technical Knowledge and Expertise

Currently, Chicago is awash with "Christmas tree" schools where large amounts of discretionary money have combined with private gifts to add new programs and more equipment, a bit like hanging dazzling ornaments on a tree. Unfortunately, the tree itself and its basic needs have gone unattended.* Awareness of this problem, however, is growing across the city and a new wisdom is emerging that the core of schooling—teachers' knowledge and classroom practices—must be substantially improved.

This development, however, points to a major unresolved issue: How can technical expertise be drawn into enhanced local politics? Schools are relatively complex entities where efficiency is highly valued. Past experiences with most educational innovations leaves us less than sanguine about how well most schools fare when developing their own strategic plans. While some may do fine on their own, many need to engage sustained outside assistance if the end result of the participation in schools is improving student learning.

How these new relationships are to be forged remains unclear. Instructional guidance in the form of top-down mandates from the central office were rarely effective in the past and seem highly inappropriate now. Similarly, the experiences of the last three years where schools have had increased freedom to purchase their own goods and services are not very encouraging (although some individual schools are notable exceptions).[14] In short, neither the command authority of a school bureaucracy nor the contractual relationship of the marketplace seems particularly well-suited for this purpose.

Interestingly, the new literature on enhanced democratic participation is largely silent on the question of how local political practice might engage effectively with outside expertise. In our view, new cooperative relationships between local schools and outside assistance appear necessary. Neither the external expert as supervisor nor as service provider will suffice. Rather, these individuals must become engaged in some fashion as participant-stakeholders in the political practice of a school community. The lessons gleaned here from Chicago's experiences should be of broad interest as they touch on larger, enduring concerns about the proper role of technical expertise in a democratic society.

Opportunities for Community Education

Finally, by expanding participation as it does, and enlarging the terrain of school politics, Chicago School Reform serves a broader community education function. These opportunities may be particularly important in urban contexts where many parents and community members are undereducated and disenfranchised, and where school professionals have also had few occasions in the past to exercise initiative. Through participation in LSCs and other school-based activities, individuals can develop public skills of citizenship, leadership and political discourse that are essential to a democratic life. This idea resonates with recent calls for renewal of our democratic institutions such as Lindblom's discussion of a need for a more self-guided society, Barber's considerations of the features of a strong democracy, Bowles and Gintis's analysis of the link between adult learning and political practice, and Evan and Boyte's notion of the educative function of "free spaces."

The emergence of "truly disadvantaged" urban communities in recent times, however, raises new questions about their ability to engage and sustain the kind of participation envisioned here, and to use the opportunities it affords for broader community education.[15] To date, much of the research on citizen participation has focused on middle class and largely homogeneous communities.[16] While there is a literature on low income neighborhoods, it is largely concerned with Great Society programs at a time when resources were relatively ample (or at least expanding) and the communities themselves were more advantaged relative to today's conditions.[17] The Chicago experiment holds promise of new knowledge about how democratic participation can be revitalized in our major urban centers.

* Especially popular are computer systems that are now sold directly to schools and promise to help children on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, but deliver computerized drill sheets that directly mimic the tests. In fact, under decentralization, local schools have become a new market for an expanding network of entrepreneurs.

References

1 *Chicago School Reform, Public Act 85-1418 (1989)*. Springfield, IL: General Assembly of the State of Illinois.

2 Moore, D.R. (1990). Voice and choice in Chicago. In W.H. Clune & J.F. Witte (Eds.), *Choice and control in American education: Vol 2. The practice of choice, decentralization and school restructuring* (pp. 153-198). Philadelphia: The Falmer Press.

3 Katz, M., Fein, M., & Simon, E. (1991, March 7). School reform: A view from outside [Letter to the editor]. *Chicago Tribune*.

4 See note 2 above, p. 193.

5 Rogers, D., & Chung, N.H. (1983). *110 Livingston Street revisited: Decentralization in action*. New York: New York University Press.

6. Hess, G.A. (1991). *School restructuring, Chicago style*. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press.

O'Connell, M. (1991, Spring). School reform Chicago style: How citizens organized to change public policy. (A special issue of *The Neighborhood Works*.) Chicago: Center for Neighborhood Technology.

Rollow, S.G. (1990). *Populism and professionalism: School reform in Chicago* [Unpublished Paper]. Chicago: University of Chicago.

7. Some evidence is already available on specific provisions of the legislation. The formula to allocate state compensatory funds directly to individual schools has had a substantial equalizing effect on resource levels within Chicago schools and has provided some of the most disadvantaged schools in the system with substantial discretionary resources to implement new programs. (See Hess, G.A. (1992). *School restructuring, Chicago style: A midway report*. Chicago: Chicago Panel on Public School Finance.) On the other hand, the provision to streamline the removal of incompetent teachers is not working at all. (See Bennett, A.L., et al. (1992). *Charting reform: The principals' perspective*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.)

8 Peterson, P.E. (1976). *School politics Chicago style*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

9 Ball, S.J. (1987). *The micro-politics of the school: Towards a theory of school organization* New York: Methuen.

10 See Ball above, p. 267.

11 This discussion develops from "An Evolving Theory of School Micro-politics," by Sharon G. Rollow, presented at the American Education Research Association annual meeting, San Francisco, 1992, and also work-in-progress on a doctoral thesis at the University of Chicago, Department of Education.

12 Barber, B.B. (1984). *Strong democracy: Participatory politics for a new age*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bellah, R.M., Madsen, R., Sullivan, W.M., Swidler, A., & Tipton, S.M. (1991). *The good society*. New York: Knopf.

Bowles, S., & Gintis, H. (1987). *Democracy and capitalism: Property, community and the contradictions of modern social thought*. New York: Basic Books.

Evans, S.M., & Boyte, H.C. (1986). *Free spaces: The sources of democratic change in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Katz, M.B. (1987). *Reconstructing American education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Lindblom, C.E. (1990). *Inquiry and change*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Mansbridge, J.J. (1980). *Beyond adversary democracy*. New York: Basic Books.

13 See Mansbridge, note 12 above.

14 See for example, Bennett note 7 above, for information about principals' efforts to seek outside expertise whether from the central office, other city agencies, and/or outside the city.

15 Wilson, W.J. (1987). *The truly disadvantaged: The inner city, the underclass, and public policy* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

16 See for example, Malen, B., & Ogawa, R.T. (1988). Professional-patron influence on site-based governance councils: A confounding case study. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 10*(4), 251-270; also see Mansbridge, note 12 above.

17 Peterson, P.E. (1981). *City limits*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Piven, F.F., & Cloward, R.A. (1971). *Regulating the poor*: The functions of public welfare. New York: Vintage Books.

Pressman, J.L., & Wildavsky, A. (1973). *Implementation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

continued from page 1

Another teacher stresses the fact that at Thomas teachers *"don't yell . . . the kids don't need that, they're not even used to it because I don't think they get yelled at home . . . and so the place doesn't seem so dictatorial and loud. I hate the chaos of those other schools."*

Perhaps most indicative of the social ties that exist at Thomas is the fact that parents and teachers talk easily together about what is best for "our children."

A *Challenge to the Status Quo*

There is, however, an obstacle to Thomas making progress on what is best for "our children." It is a structural cleavage that exists between the bilingual transition program and the monolingual English one. Such division appears typical in Hispanic schools, although little attention is generally paid to it.

"At Thomas parents and teachers talk together easily about what is best for 'our children.'"

At Thomas the split is the legacy of previous administrators who created "two schools in one" with separate budgets, programs and materials, faculties, students and families. Different norms have developed across the two programs as well. Many parents want their children to stay in the bilingual program because there are fewer discipline problems, and students are more respectful of adults and less susceptible to gangs. English dominant students denigrate the "other" children by calling them "brazers" and "mojados." As one teacher told us, this cleavage used to be "the big silence of the school. . . under the old principal we didn't talk about it because it would tear us a part."

Facilitative leadership: The principal

Mr. Sanchez assumed the principalship two years prior to reform, and at his first faculty meeting he spoke of his dreams: *"I want this to be a real bilingual school, where all of you are bilingual so that you can talk with all of the students. . .a school where there's no split between the programs, and so children and teachers can't look down on each other. A school where everyone speaks Spanish and English. A school for this community."*

The faculty was alarmed by their principal's first words. One teacher said: *"In the regular program we were all threatened at first. . . Wouldn't you be? It sounded like we were going to get fired. . . . Over time—and healed wounds—the same goals didn't sound like a threat. Well, then too Mr. Sanchez has toned down a lot. . .He'd never make statements like that again. . . But the goal*

hasn't changed. It's a vision, I think, of an integrated school."

Over the last several years Mr. Sanchez has used the powers of the principalship to challenge the pre-existing "definition of the school." He has opened communications with his parents and faculty about his vision of an integrated school. The teacher quoted above has begun Spanish lessons, as have many of her colleagues in the "regular" program. Four years later the split between the two programs at Thomas is no longer the "big silence." It is now becoming deeply contested and debated ground.

Top: *Eighth grade computer class*
Bottom: *Dance rehersal in the gym*

Community education was also on the principal's agenda when he arrived at Thomas. He has sought to integrate parents and families into the life of the school and is convinced that their participation will enhance their lives and their children's, and improve the school. Before the first LSC elections, Mr. Sanchez encouraged parents and community residents to run for the LSC and vote. (Citizenship was not a requirement for voting in the LSC elections.)

"I stood in front of all the Sunday masses and said, "This is reform...Why don't you exercise your rights?"... That's when I said, "You're talking to a person willing to commit himself for the cause...And I was ready. I was not only ready for this to happen successfully. It's a matter that we have to excel and we have to do it. We have to get all these things done."

Although the principal is middle class and well educated, he respects "his people" and understands "their struggle." "Sometimes", he told us, "I feel like I'm back in my own country. Not working as a principal but maybe in front of a congregation. You know . . . a liberation theology priest."

During the first year of reform Mr. Sanchez and the Council spent long nights and weekends working together to read and prepare budgets, and develop the first SIP and a needs assessment. While he has some detractors among both parents and teachers who accuse him of conferring too much with this "elite" elected group, he argues that working with the LSC is one opportunity to educate his community:

"Working with my Council and my parents. . .yes. . .it has taken up a lot of my time. That first year I never got home before midnight. But it is a tremendous opportunity, nonetheless. You know, so many principals complain that they don't have the time to educate their parents; 'it's not my job' they say. But then they turn around and put even more time into controlling their councils. I see this as the opportunity of our reform, to educate my parents. I am tired, but we should all be doing this."

He steered his Council toward outside sources of assistance regarding his contract evaluation and encouraged them to engage a broad, participatory process. Interviewed the morning after he received a (near) unanimous vote for retention, Mr. Sanchez talked about his pride for the job his school community had done:

"It was a wonderful experience for me. I prepared for my interview and it was a time for me to reflect. I thought about all that I had done and of course how much more there is to do. But I was proud of my parents. The process that they went through. I think they learned a lot from it and I hope that they are proud too."

Enhanced Participation among Parents and Community Members

The LSC is not the only avenue that has been paved at Thomas for parent involvement. Thomas parents participate in Project CANAL, a federally funded, multi-year program that facilitates shared decision-making in select racially isolated schools and also adds significantly to their discretionary budgets. Several of the teachers on the CANAL core planning team

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

encouraged parents, other than those who sit on the LSC, to join their team. Additional parents were recruited to the ESEA and Bilingual Advisory Committees. Last year parents worked with a group of volunteer teachers and the principal to start a parent education center. There are already GED, citizenship and computer classes, and plans are underway for additional classes that parents have requested. Most importantly, the center is a place where parents congregate. There is coffee and a phone, and parents encourage teachers and office staff to drop in when they have time.

Taken together, these various committees and the parent center have engaged a substantial group of parents beyond the LSC in the school. Moreover, a core group of teachers share their principals' sentiment that developing citizenship and leadership skills for parents will enhance their children's education and support their work.

The Emergence of Teacher's Collective Voice

The faculty's efforts to engage parents, while not unprecedented, is unusual. Noteworthy too, are current joint efforts of bilingual and monolingual English teachers to write restructuring proposals, develop strategic plans, and engage consultants to work with them. As one of the teachers from the "regular" program reported: *"We've been writing restructuring proposals all summer, me and Jan and Alice from bilingual. We've had to think about what comprehensive restructuring really means. We're saying we want a chance to really look at our programs and our teaching and think seriously about why our kids aren't learning like they should."*

Teacher professionalism is emerging at Thomas, catalyzed by a core group of faculty that is thoughtful and talented. Their efforts are generally supported by their principal. Typically, the most pro-active teachers and Mr. Sanchez consult with each other. When they have common goals and strategies, he grants them independence and wide latitude to make their own decisions. By his own admission, however, he does not hesitate to squelch projects he finds without educational merit. This behavior leaves him open to charges from various teachers—similar to those leveled at him by some parents—that he favors an elite group.

At Alexander, although encouragement and training were available, the many impediments to sustain community participation caused the process to be superficial.

Their efforts seem also to be bolstered by on-going support from Project CANAL. Teachers in urban schools, just like parents in urban communities, need assistance to engage in democratic practice because the centralized control mechanisms of the past have afforded them few opportunities to develop democratic skills. CANAL seems to have given these teachers a shot in the arm.

Even with all of this activity, Thomas teachers still struggle to figure out "why our kids aren't learning like they should." They have formed relationships with a number of outside organizations, many of them university-based, to bring pedagogical expertise into the school. To date these activities remain segmented by subject matter, grade level and teacher. Gradually, the faculty is beginning to recognize that these disparate individual efforts are unlikely to cumulate in enhanced student learning. A more systematic approach that scrutinizes and strengthens core school activities appears needed. Thus, teachers' current involvement in writing comprehensive restructuring proposals represents an important departure from past practice.

This proposal writing is significant for another reason as well. By engaging teachers from the bilingual and monolingual English programs, it creates opportunity for dialogue across the two groups and this may begin to bridge the "great divide."

In sum, an activism and a hopefulness exist at Thomas. Considerable resources from within the school system and local universities have been assembled. A substantial group of parents and community members, along with a growing core of talented teachers, are regularly engaged in school improvement activities. A thoughtful and committed principal provides leadership, is educative toward his parents, and facilitative toward his teachers. Most importantly for the emergence of democratic politics, a vital but contested discourse proceeds about the definition of the Thomas School, and whether it will become a true "bilingual school" which is responsive to "all our children and our community."

Alexander Elementary School:

A Place Reform Left Behind

A Lack of Social Resources

Thirty years ago Alexander's school community had neighborhood and family resources much like Thomas does now. Today, in contrast, this is a "truly disadvantaged" neighborhood with a preponderance of female-headed households, an absence of middle class and male role models, a loss of population and community institutions, and a diminution of political activity. Most importantly, this community lacks the extended networks which support families in the nearby Hispanic community. Without such networks, the consequences of poverty, drugs and violence appear much more devastating here, especially to the "young moms" who struggle on their own to keep their children safe and to survive.

The current situation contrasts with the not-so-distant past when mothers—

in this neighborhood and others just like it—were generally older, somewhat more advantaged, and less hesitant to talk to teachers. Fathers and grandparents were also sometimes involved. Today, educators in the school know that there are not many men to call upon: "*there's boys and old men and the old folk are afraid to come out of their houses. Everything in between is in jail or dead.*"

Only a small group of mothers participate regularly in school activities. The efforts of these women are deeply appreciated by the school staff, but like the teachers, they complain of being "burnt out." The principal and some teachers are concerned about the isolation of the school from its community, and also the isolation of people in the community from each other. They are also concerned that students today lack some role models they used to have: middle-class working people, older people, and men.

Currently, the main group with potential to become a viable presence is the "young moms," and although the LSC chair talks about her efforts to "corral" some of them to get involved, she knows it will not be easy. One reason is safety. The school wants no responsibility for people being out after dark, which forces meetings to be scheduled during the school day. Consequently, those parents who work—some who are the most interested and have the most to contribute—can never attend meetings. A problem for yet another group of parents is embarrassment: The reluctance of some undereducated parents converse with teachers. Finally, in some cases, a latent hostility keeps parents away. Some young moms have negative memories of their own schooling, and believe that teachers regard them with disdain. The LSC chair asks, then answers her own question about what "kind of role models these moms are for their kids when they feel so hateful and hated? It can't be good."

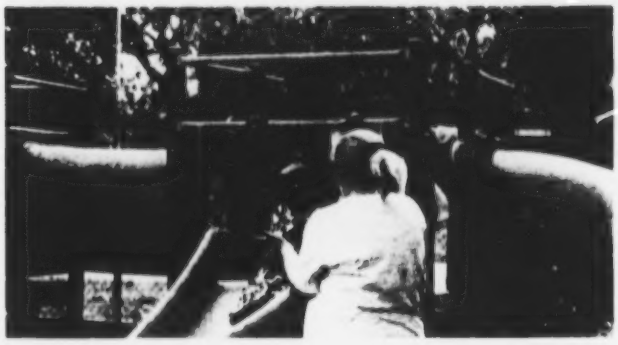
Top: *Individualized reading instruction*
Bottom: *Science class*

Disabling Principal Leadership

Being a principal in a truly disadvantaged school community is difficult. Mrs. Green has to do double duty, with parents as well as teachers, to overcome their isolation, hostility, fear, lack of confidence, and skills. Mrs. Green has tackled this challenge by becoming the school's "mother." She has been in the school "since forever" (she came to Alexander as a 22 year-old teacher), and "she knows everyone and everything." She has accepted the burden of nurturing this school community. Indeed, parents and children often view her and the school as a safe haven, which compared to the neighborhood, it is. Mrs. Green admits, at times, she is an "overprotective mother reluctant to let any of her children grow." She recognizes that some of the parents' and teachers' dependence might be because she does too much for them.

Mrs. Green's maternal style has also taken a personal toll. Since the advent of reform, she has "never been so exhausted," and she finds herself "snapping out" in a way that disturbs her and offends the very people she so wishes will succeed. She describes with regret:
"*I called two teachers in for a conference regarding the performance of their students on the IOWA tests. I remember saying, 'I'm ashamed of you. You could have stayed at home and the students could have stayed at home to get these results. This is ridiculous. You were coming every day and they were coming*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



Recess

every day, for what?' That's terrible. I mean I was so angry to get those scores, that it caught me at a bad moment. I later apologized."

Mrs. Green wants reform to succeed in her school. She wants to see her parents and their children create a better life for themselves. She wants her faculty to become more professional, too, not only so children will learn more, but "so that they will feel better about themselves." She worries about the distance her school community must travel to achieve her vision.

Limited Parent and Community Involvement

The LSC at Alexander contains a core of hard working and well-intentioned women between the ages of twenty-five and thirty. The chair has often said she is proud that there is no fighting on her Council or in their school, as in some other neighboring schools. Unfortunately, there is little conversation either.

When PA 85-1418 first passed, it seemed the Act might make a difference. Everyone was curious about the new law, and there was a flurry of activity. Initially the LSC acted much like its counterpart at Thomas. The Council told the principal they wanted to skip the evaluation and just write a contract. There the comparison ends. At Thomas the LSC was encouraged to take the process of evaluation seriously—and did. At Alexander, although encouragement and training were available, because of the many impediments to sustained participation in this community, the process was superficial. There was minimal involvement, minimal discussion, and minimal learning as a result.

By the second year of reform, excitement had dissipated. Monthly LSC meetings were called, but rarely was there a quorum, and there was never an audience. Only in the spring, when a system-wide financial crunch threatened the school with closure did the LSC get moving again. The school stayed open (because the Board of Education was pressured by community activists city-wide not to close any schools at that time), but the experience failed to unite the school community. The LSC chair felt overwhelmed, tired, and discouraged when only fifty parents showed up for a "Save Alexander Rally" she organized. Mrs. Green expressed her frustration by calling parents "the most apathetic bunch" she had ever seen. Once the crisis passed, the principal and the LSC chair called meetings to discuss how the school might distinguish itself enough to avoid future closing lists. The meetings went unattended.

A Wary and Uncertain Faculty

The problems of the LSC are mirrored in the experiences of Alexander's Professional Personnel Advisory Committee (PPAC) and larger faculty as it too grapples with local school governance. Sixteen candidates competed for the first PPAC election, because as noted earlier, everyone was curious. Teachers were confused, however, about the PPAC's identity and purpose. Many thought it was the "Professional Problems Committee" for the union. Others understood that the PPAC was to offer advice on issues of curriculum and instruction, but they were unclear if it independent of the principal. Some members said they could not discuss pedagogy without the principal; others insisted they could never develop an independent voice if s.he joined them. (This confusion among the teachers at Alexander as to the PPAC's role and also the participation of the principal was repeated throughout the city during the first year of reform.)

This issue absorbed the PPAC's attention most of the school year. It was a controversy from which they never recovered. The principal dropped out when appraised of the discussion surrounding her participation—so did the contingent that wanted her involved. The chair abdicated next, and another teacher volunteered to replace her since "no one else wanted it." When no candidates signed up for an election, the chair asked a few faculty friends to volunteer as a personal favor. The new PPAC met once in the fall of 1992, but has not met since.

In addition to their inability to organize a PPAC, as a whole, the faculty shows little interest in their own growth as professionals. Alexander teachers (like a majority of faculties across the city) approved a closed campus several years ago, and most the teachers keep the same short hours (8:30 am to 2:30 pm) students do. This means that a few teachers are called upon to do everything, a situation that parallels the LSC.

Some teachers at Alexander, like some parents on the LSC, are caring, hard working, and deeply concerned about the students. They would like to serve them better and over the years they have individually enrolled in countless courses, and bought dozens of programs. But nothing seems to bring achievement up. Some of these teachers persist in their efforts, while others have gotten demoralized and one by one they have given up. These teachers blame the

students and the young moms for low achievement, and insist that they "have tried everything." This portion of the veteran faculty is "riding out their time" until retirement. Ms. Green complains that their lack of motivation to examine their own practice is the most serious obstacle to school improvement:

"They are convinced in their minds that they are fantastic teachers. . . . And they have had successes through the years, but things have changed. Getting them to understand that and to change is, the most difficult kind of thing. Take our primary teachers. . . . I have some teachers here who have not gone back to school since they got, and this is the honest to goodness truth, since they got their diploma in 1959. Now reading alone has changed, the whole philosophy has changed in the last five or ten years and they're still doing things like then. This is a poor neighborhood, the social family structures have changed a great deal and for many of our teachers, they are teaching to the students that we had in 1963 and we don't have that kind of student anymore."

It is instructive to note that a majority of the teachers at Alexander went to Chicago schools as students. Most were then credentialed in Chicago, and have subsequently spent their entire careers at Alexander, or a school just like it. These teachers are hard pressed to imagine alternatives. This poses a significant obstacle to reform as the heart of this legislation is the opportunity, in each local school community, to create alternatives. When we asked the assistant principal to describe for us "a good school" he said, "off the top of my head, that's hard for me to say. . .I haven't graduated to that way of thinking yet."

In sum, Alexander's situation is troubled. The malaise, isolation, and alienation that pervades the neighborhood is mirrored in the school. Teachers have few external resources to support their work and they often appear uninterested in change. Some parents work hard for the school, but their numbers are few. The principal is a tragic-hero who tries to care for all of them—students, parents and teachers—but whose maternal leadership ironically stifles initiative and disables others' capacity to grow. At first visit, Thomas appears as a peaceful island amidst a truly disadvantaged community. But that peace is secured at a price: Little of significance is ever discussed; activity is rarely organized or sustained. The status quo seems insurmountable.

Concluding Comments

We deliberately chose to describe Alexander and Thomas because they represent some of the best and worst of what we are observing. Such contrasts help to sharpen understanding of key factors influencing the implementation of Chicago's school reform. While still relatively early in our research, three observations already stand out. First, although both schools serve disadvantaged students, the differences in neighborhood contexts have important effects. The social resources present in the Thomas community greatly facilitate initial efforts at school reform; in contrast, the absence of these resources at Alexander make the task considerably more difficult. Thus, as noted earlier, while democratic localism can enable a school community, there is a "Catch 22." The emergence of such a politics appears to require a base of social resources on which to build.

Second, these contrasting cases highlight the importance of school leadership in promoting change. Rigid bureaucracy and autocratic action characterize organizational life in urban school systems. The transition from this to more democratic forms of governance make special demands on school leadership. Although not without his detractors, Mr. Sanchez at Thomas appears successful in enabling participation among parents, community and faculty. His facilitative orientation, combined with a moral vision of Thomas as a "bilingual school serving this community," plays a critical role. Alexander, in contrast, lacks such leadership.

Finally, both cases illumine the still unsettled role for external expertise in school improvement. The CANAL training in group process and communication appears to have helped the Thomas faculty initiate a dialogue that spans their "great divide." Although some classroom innovations are being initiated with outside assistance, these developments fall short of the comprehensive restructuring that many believe is necessary to improve student learning. The lack of sustained, comprehensive external support for these efforts is a significant weakness, not only at Thomas but generally across the entire school system. This need is even more obvious at Alexander where school and community conditions pose larger problems. By nature of the traditional organization of schools, the work of adults is highly segmented. The existing mechanisms to support improvement efforts are equally so. If schools are to engage change which is truly systemic, more comprehensive support and new institutional arrangements for providing it will be needed.

by Sharon G. Rollow

---

[1] Each school has been given a pseudonym; details about the schools and communities have been masked to preserve their anonymity. In all other respects, these cases are specific to two Chicago sites.

Photographs do not represent schools discussed in this *Issue Report*. Special thanks two Chicago Schools for permission to photograph their parents, staff and children: Maria Saucedo Scholastic Academy, Karen Morris, Principal; and Richard E. Byrd Community Academy, Janis Todd, Principal.

The discussion of Thomas is developed in part from a paper by Maria Josefina Yanguas titled "Cultural Politics in Two Chicago Latino Elementary Schools," Center for School Improvement, University of Chicago, 1992.

Discussion of the Alexander school community draws from two case studies. The first is an unpublished master's thesis by Lisa Moultrie, University of Chicago, Department of Education: "The School Reform Left Behind." The second was written for the school site program of the Center for School Improvement by Sharon Rollow and Hal Gershenson.

Support from a Foundation:
Peter Martinez

Long dedicated to education, the MacArthur Foundation has become one of the most influential actors in Chicago school reform. MacArthur currently funds more than 20 separate initiatives relating to six areas of school restructuring: 1) Restructuring the school (working to enhance student learning); 2) Parent involvement (encouraging more informed decision-making, boosting classroom volunteering, and promoting parents as mentors at home); 3) Coordination of social services (trying to organize private and public agencies at the community level); 4) Improving services in central administration (studying ways to improve the efficiency, management and finances of newly decentralized offices); 5) Adult literacy (encouraging all citizens to be educated); 6) Research documentation and dissemination (funding research through groups like the Consortium on School Reform Research).

Can foundation programs make a difference in the success of school reform in an inner city? Peter Martinez believes they can. Martinez directs the Chicago Educational Initiative, MacArthur's long-term pledge to school reform, a $40 million commitment over 10 years. With 35 years experience nationally as an organizer for community groups and an advocate for Latino causes, Martinez works to link community and corporate groups to facilitate restructuring of schools and classrooms.

We are approaching reform from the perspective of systematic change. We are looking for key leverage points, for the public and private stakeholders needed and committed to making change happen, and to identify what change strategies are needed. Then we define a role for private sector funding that helps leverage public funding to make those changes happen.

The whole issue of restructuring is at the center of what has to be done to improve student learning. That involves organizational change and instructional change at the local school level, focusing on things like interactive learning, critical thinking, peer learning, teachers working in groups, a team approach working inside of a school.

A concrete example of that funding is the $1.2 million grant MacArthur awarded to the Chicago Teachers Union to set up the Quest Center.

It is basically a restructuring resource center, which was funded after long months of dialogue in which we became convinced of a very genuine effort of the teachers' union to take a leadership role in changing the profession. They identified some very talented people within their ranks who understood restructuring and had built up relationships with the leading scholars in the field: the Anne Liebermans, the Ted Sizers, the Elmores, and so on.

We at MacArthur, wanted to see a program agenda outlined that clearly indicated the union was going for dramatic whole school reform. It turns out that their own thinking was moving in that direction. They felt that if teachers took the initiative and the union was

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Gym class in the parking lot

behind them, change would be faster and more dramatic.

The union set up a governance board representing all stakeholders in reform: teaching and administrative professionals and business, community, and reform groups; and an advisory board of experts who could be available for consultation to the project.

This is proving to be successful, although the Quest Center has only been operating since January. A 2-day restructuring conference in March brought in people from all over the country, with all the prototypes people typically point to as restructuring models. The union anticipated that 250 teachers would sign up; they had 500. They could only accommodate 350! Those teachers came on a Saturday on their own time with no pay, and they paid a registration fee.

The conference led to a couple of different educational experiences for teachers: a program of university courses and a restructuring conference held over spring break. Each of these learning opportunities drew about two hundred teachers.

That says a number of things to me. One, that the union has the kind of relationships with teachers that allows them to develop support of this size. And I think that they will be in a position to increase attendance at these conferences to over 1,000. The second thing is that there are many teachers out there who are really curious about restructuring, are willing to spend the time, and don't have to be paid.

Martinez explained that MacArthur funds only those initiatives which attempt to change the way the system itself does things. *Get the system to do its job well the first time around. So if somebody, for example, comes in with a great drop-out prevention program we're not going to fund it. We think that the best drop-out program is a restructured school, and teachers trained to do their job the way in which it has proven to be effective.*

The Chicago School Reform Act will generate significant positive change, in his opinion. The Act freed up $230 million worth of Chapter One money for schools to disperse on a discretionary basis. Thanks to these funds, most schools have a substantial amount left over for innovative reform even after mainline budget costs. Martinez says this discretionary money should be sufficient to stimulate significant school change. But it is currently not always used efficiently.

That money ought to be aimed at paying experts to plan the restructuring of their school. In most cases it's not being spent that way. It's being spent for computers and reading instruction. It's being spent to improve an old system, to shine up an old car, rather than come in with a new mode of transportation.

As Martinez sees it, reform is headed in the right direction: Toward instructional change and enhanced student achievement. But it isn't happening fast enough.

People in research and policy development have got to have a greater sense of urgency. They can't take forever to do their research and their policy development. The education profession itself has got to have a greater sense of urgency about reforming itself than it has, or clearly the voucher advocates are going to gain increasingly more beachhead.

The other part of it is that I think there is too much sensitivity focused on the adults (teachers and principals) in this system and their comfort level with change. This sensitivity for adults, causes people to lose sight of the thousand of kids lives in the ghettos and barrios of the city are going down the sewer every single day.

Researchers say it takes 35 years for research to turn into practice. Others say it takes 10 years to change a school. Well, you can change schools in three years. You can't mandate change we're told, you can't make people do things. Well, you can do a lot to entice people to make change and to lead people to make change, and to stir their imagination and then challenge them to do something that is going to be substantive and real in a short period of time. You can turn an organization around in three years and can solidify the change in five. And there is plenty of documentation to prove that.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

For Further Reading:

On Chicago School Reform

Bennett, A.L., et al. (1992). *Charting reform: The principals' perspective*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

Easton, J.Q., Bryk, A.S., Discoll, M.E., Kotsakis, JG., Sebring, P.A., & van der Ploeg, A.J. (1990). *Charting Reform: The teachers' turn*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

Hess, G.A. (1991). *School reform Chicago style*. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press.

O'Connell, M. (1991, Spring). School reform Chicago style: How citizens organized to change public policy. (A special issue of *The Neighborhood Works*.) Chicago: Center for Neighborhood Technology.

On the Politics of Education and Enhanced Democratic Politics

Ball, S.J. (1987). *The micro-politics of the school: Towards a theory of school organization*. New York: Methuen.

Barber, BR. (1984). *Strong democracy: Participatory politics for a new age*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Blase, J. J. (1991). *The politics of life in schools: Power, conflict and cooperation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Boyte, H. C. (1981). *The backyard revolution: Understanding the new citizen movement*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Cibulka, J.G., Reed, R.J., & Wong, K.K. (1992). *The politics of urban education in the United States: The 1991 Yearbook of the Politics of Education Association*. Washington, DC: Falmer Press.

Fantini, M., Gittell, M., & Magat, R. (1970). *Community control and the urban school*. New York: Praeger Publishers.

Mansbridge, J.J. (1980). *Beyond adversary democracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

For more information on Chicago School Reform, please contact:

Catalyst
Linda Lenz, Editor
332 S. Michigan Avenue, Suite 500
Chicago, IL 60604-4302
312/427-4830 [FAX: 312/427-6130]

Center for School Improvement
Sharon Rollow, Assistant Director
Department of Education
University of Chicago
5835 S. Kimbark Street
Chicago, IL 60637
312/702-0663 [FAX: 312/702-2010]

Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance
John Easton, Director of Research
220 S. State Street
Chicago, IL 60604
312/939-2202 [FAX: 312/939-2564]

Chicago Teachers Union Quest Center
Deborah Walsh, Director
222 Merchandise Mart Plaza, Suite 400
Chicago, IL 60654
312/329-9100 [FAX: 312/329-6200]

Chicago Urban League
Gwen LaRouche, Director
Department of Education
4510 S. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60653
312/285-5800 [FAX: 312/285-7772]

Consortium on Chicago School Research
Heather Palmer, Director of Operations and Communications
5835 S. Kimbark Street
Chicago, IL 60637
312/702-8047 [FAX: 312/702-2010]

Designs for Change
Don Moore, Executive Director
220 S. State Street, Suite 1900
Chicago, IL 60604
312/922-0317 [FAX: 312/922-6993]

Latino Institute
Sylvia Puente, Director of Research
228 S. Wabash, 6th Floor
Chicago, Il 60604
312/663-3603 [FAX: 312/786-1702]

Issue Report No. 3 **Fall 1992**

RESTRUCTURING SCHOOL GOVERNANCE: THE CHICAGO EXPERIENCE

CENTER ON ORGANIZATION AND RESTRUCTURING OF SCHOOLS
School of Education
Wisconsin Center for Education Research
University of Wisconsin–Madison
1025 W. Johnson Street
Madison, WI 53706

Nonprofit Organization
US Postage
PAID
Madison, Wisconsin
Permit No. 1622

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

**********3-DIGIT 208
Ted Brandhorst
ERIC - AEC PROP SERVS. GRP.
INFORMATION SYSTEMS DIVISION
1301 PICCARD DR
ROCKVILLE MD 20850-4305

Printed on recycled paper

Issues in Restructuring Schools
is prepared by Karen Prager and published twice a year at the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools (Grant No. R117Q000015-92), supported by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, and by the Wisconsin Center for Education Research, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison. The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the supporting agencies. This publication is available free on request.

Director: Fred M. Newmann
Associate Director: Gary Wehlage
Dissemination Coordinator: Karen Prager
Administrative Assistant: Diane Randall
Graphic Designer: Rhonda Dix

CENTER MISSION

The Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools will study how organizational features of schools can be changed to increase the intellectual and social competence of students. The five-year program of research focuses on restructuring in four areas: the experiences of students in school; the professional life of teachers; the governance, management and leadership of schools; and the coordination of community resources to better serve educationally disadvantaged students.

Through syntheses of previous research, analyses of existing data, and new empirical studies of education reform, the Center will focus on six critical issues for elementary, middle and high schools: How can schooling nurture authentic forms of student achievement? How can schooling enhance educational equity? How can decentralization and local empowerment be constructively developed? How can schools be transformed into communities of learning? How can change be approached through thoughtful dialogue and support rather than coercion and regulation? How can the focus on student outcomes be shaped to serve these five principles?

CENTER PUBLICATIONS

In the fall and spring of each year, the Center publishes a newsletter, *Issues in Restructuring Schools*, which offers analyses of substantive issues. In addition, three "briefs" targeted to special audiences will be offered yearly, and our 1992 Bibliography, currently available, will be updated each year. Occasional papers will be available at cost. To be placed on the mailing list, please contact: Karen Prager, Dissemination Coordinator, Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools, University of Wisconsin, 1025 W. Johnson Street, Madison, WI 53706. Telephone: (608) 263-7575.